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Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

2018-2019 OCUFA TEACHING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS

CITATION FOR PROF. ANDREW PETERSEN



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Prepared and ready by Don Kinder, Ryerson University

On behalf of the Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee, I am delighted to present Andrew Petersen, Associate Professor (Teaching Stream) within the Department of Mathematical and Computational Sciences at the University of Toronto (Mississauga) with a 2018-2019 award in recognition of his excellence in teaching.

For an instructor who has been teaching for a little more than a decade, Andrew has done a remarkable job contributing to the advancement of innovation in teaching and learning practices at UTM, and beyond. At the same time, so much of what Andrew does focuses on his own students. This comprehensive, well-rounded approach to pedagogy has resulted in his receiving of the UTM's *Teaching Excellence Award* and the University of Toronto's higher award for teaching, the *President's Teaching Award*. On top of all this, Andrew ranks as one of the highest scoring Computer Science faculty members in all categories of student rankings at UTM. Andrew is clearly a highly regarded colleague and mentor, as well. "I can say without hesitation," writes a colleague, "that of all the colleagues and partners with whom I have worked, Andrew is the best-- he deeply cares about people, thinks carefully about issues and is a committed teacher for both his students and his colleagues."

As a computer scientist, Andrew has used his extensive skills to develop internationally-recognized pedagogical tools that have had a significant impact on teaching and learning at the University of Toronto and other institutions. These tools include an "anonymous web-based feedback system" that allows students to raise concerns and post questions in their classes--a



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system that is currently used by more than forty instructors at the University. Working with his students, Andrew also developed the *Programming Course Resource System (PCRS)*, an online teaching tool that facilitates the posting of content modules, videos, exercises and practice questions.

As a teacher, Andrew is truly a community builder. “I believe membership in a well-organized learning community is the most important factor for enabling student success,” he states in his Teaching Philosophy. “My primary goal from the first day of a course is to foster a sense of belonging that is conducive to questioning, discussion, and collaboration.” Andrew’s classes are driven by student interaction monitored through many channels, including continuous student feedback gleaned from free question-and-answer periods, weekly quizzes, an open door policy, reading groups, and through the instructional tools that he and his students have developed. These forums—some physical, some electronic, and some anonymous—provide his students with a choice of outlets for communicating with their instructor and each other, and ultimately spark curiosity in his students. “I have always believed that it is the mark of a good teacher to be the wind in the sails of their students, to push them to the limits of their abilities and bring out the best in them,” writes a student. “Andrew has done this to an immeasurable extent for countless students that have all reaped the benefits of his influence on their lives.”

The sense of community and of belonging fostered in Andrew’s courses also extends beyond the classroom. He is well-known for his strong dedication in advocating for improved representation and equity in computer science education, and for providing many learning options for students who identify as English Language Learners. “This is how Andrew operates”, a colleague states.



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“He identifies something that gets in the way of student learning, and does something to address it. He is building his career around removing barriers and creating innovative opportunities for student learning and skills development.”

Please join me in congratulating Andrew Petersen, recipient of the 2018/2019 OCUFA Teaching Award.